

## Memories of Temple Fire Station – moving in

Station Officer Roger Hacker (retired)

When the contractors had finished building the new fire station at Temple Back, we had to patrol the building twice a day, just to check there weren't any problems, and I couldn't believe the space we were going to have, there were even 3 lecture rooms, but I'm glad I had the chance to serve at Bridewell, there was history in the walls there. I moved to Bridewell from Avonmouth about 6 months before we moved across to Temple.

I was on blue watch and we were on duty during the move. It was on a Sunday, and we had to be on radio contact while all the telecoms were switched over. Station Officer O'Driscoll was in charge at the time, and I was either LF or Sub, I can't remember which. I think we had 2 pumps, a rescue tender and a TL to transfer, as well as a Land Rover, and there were about 20 of us crew to get across.

Once we got to Temple, they had to test the new alarm system, broadcast over a tannoy. They had to do this several times, and there were pauses between the tests. During one of these pauses we were in the process of moving some furniture, I think it may have been a bed, up the back stairs when the alarms went again and we weren't sure if it was another test or a real shout, so we left the furniture and dashed back down the stairs, only to find it was another test! But later on, we did have the first real shout from the new station, to a restaurant on Baldwin Street, which had a rotisserie, I can't remember the name of the place, but it was a minor incident which was quickly dealt with. Blue watch were on nights the next shift, so we also had the first night shout from Temple.

I remember down in the basement in the switch room there was a big emergency generator and one of the other things we had to do was throw the switch to cut the electrics and test the emergency generator, but we hadn't realised how loud it would be down there in a confined space, so it nearly deafened us and frightened us half to death!

At the end of the day, it all went smoothly, and it was like moving into a posh hotel after living in a boarding house, with all the new facilities, you just couldn't grasp it at first! And we had so much space to use, with proper dormitories, the sports hall, the yard and the underground space for training, and the workshops were next door so you could always pop across if you had any problems. The beauty of that station was that you could turn out in any direction from there, it was ideally situated.

One of the other memories of Bridewell was the station doors were only just wide enough to get the appliance out, you'd have a person outside with a torch or a flag to stop the traffic and you had to drive out straight into the road before you could turn, almost into the pub opposite. Bridewell was on three levels, there were junior and senior officers on the top floor, and if you were up there when you got a shout you had 3 poles to drop, the last one into the engine house was the longest, but I'm glad to know the building is still there and in use, it's a part of history.